

NEW: On April 28, 2017, the Service met with representatives (including their legal counsel) from No More Deaths. They reiterated their position that they intend to continue putting out water, food, and clothing for illegal border crossers (IBCs) for humanitarian purposes, on not only the refuge, but surrounding federal lands as well. Their purpose is to save lives and claim that putting out food and clothing in addition to water is consistent with Red Cross protocol. They also requested the use of administrative trails in designated wilderness to improve their access and ability to achieve their mission which not only includes putting out humanitarian aid but also to conduct search and rescue operations as well as search for human remains. They were reminded that there were already governmental entities that perform search and rescue operations. The No More Deaths representatives also indicated that they felt they should be able to drive off road when necessary to perform search and rescue operations, including in designated wilderness. In the end, they basically stated that they will do what they have to do and if we issue them citations, so be it. They also stated that they intend to request the Assistant U.S. Attorney's Office in Tucson to facilitate a meeting with them and federal land management agencies to reach some accommodation. The Service is opposed to putting out water, food, and clothing as it not only results in a large amount of trash being deposited but also could put IBCs in additional harm's way as they continue their journey. Because most of the IBCs on the refuge are narcotic smugglers, the Service also has concerns of how humanitarian support could have an effect on such activity. The Service prefers the installation of more rescue beacons by Border Patrol in lieu of the humanitarian aid as these installations saves lives while not providing sustenance for smugglers to continue their journey.